

ASSESSING AI INTEGRATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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In the dynamic landscape of education, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become increasingly apparent. This study contextualizes AI's role within higher education, exploring its opportunities and challenges, such as its potential as a supportive work aid and concerns regarding its unreflected misuse. Focusing on the example of writing software requirements with AI's assistance, a comprehensive analysis investigates students' utilization of AI in a bachelor's module. The study centered on a student assignment involving the assessment of the requirement sentence and the students' reflections and evaluations of AI-generated outcomes. A class of eighteen students were tasked with having AI generate requirements for a specific scenario, then critically evaluate these requirements and assess their alignment with established writing templates and quality criteria. The students' submissions were assessed using an evaluation rubric, grading their final requirement sentences, documentation of prompts, and written reflective assessments. The students' prompts were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively to explore their approaches to the assignment with AI. A questionnaire provided further insights into students' current experiences with AI. The findings revealed diverse approaches to AI interaction, with students utilizing various AI tools, not limited to ChatGPT, demonstrating their advanced proficiency in applying AI technologies. On average, students' requirement submissions were of notably higher quality than previous semesters. This improvement was particularly remarkable, considering that it was assumed that some students might have been secretly and unreflectively using AI tools already in the previous semester. Furthermore, student reflections consistently emphasized the indispensable role of prior subject-specific knowledge acquired in the classroom. They viewed AI as a valuable supplementary tool that enhanced their learning experiences, acting as a 'sparring partner' rather than a substitute for mastering subject knowledge. The questionnaire results further underscored AI's influential role in students' personal and academic lives. This study offers a detailed exploration of AI integration in a higher education course, highlighting its potential and challenges. While acknowledging limitations such as small sample size and the absence of a control group, the study emphasizes the need for further research into refining AI integration strategies and comprehending its broader educational implications. Additionally, it underscores the importance of investigating objective assessment criteria for assignments completed with AI assistance.